

# One Year Mark

## Acceler8 recipe for success

*Progress whisks along on eight accelerated Everglades restoration projects*



A year ago, Gov. Jeb Bush revealed plans for the *Acceler8* initiative to step up the pace on Everglades restoration and bring needed benefits to South Florida sooner. To date, tremendous progress has been made in “kicking it up a notch,” as TV-chef Emeril Lagasse would say.

Each project requires a heap of ingredients for plating up restoration goals. From work orders to design orders; permit applications to permit approvals; land acquisition to land use changes; surveys, samplings and studies – they’re all being added to the pot. And the burner is heating up. The *Acceler8* projects are highlighted in yellow on the map on the center page.

Already completed are two test cells for the **Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir** in western Palm Beach County. This fact-finding project was designed, permitted and under way in only three months after Gov. Bush announced the rollout of *Acceler8*. The test cells serve as a “sampling” for future success of the full-scale project. The EAA Reservoir will capture, move and store regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee, reducing harmful discharges to the estuaries.

In Collier County, the aroma of restoration is in the air. The **Picayune Strand Restoration Project** is reestablishing natural sheetflow to enhance wetlands. Already, canals have been filled in and we’re seeing the return of natural vegetation to the 2-mile Prairie Canal area, with documented evidence that endangered panthers are returning to the habitat. Additionally, permit approvals and design reports for the pump stations are complete, as well as initial design work orders.

In Hendry County, the **C-43 (Caloosahatchee River) West Reservoir** is perking, as is the **C-44 (St. Lucie Canal) Reservoir** in Martin County. The biggest news is that the 12,000-acre C-44 land acquisition is scheduled to close in January 2006. Also, a test cell for each reservoir will be built. Final test cell construction documents have been completed for the C-43 reservoir as well as a test cell water quality monitoring plan, and the project will move forward by the first of the year. Draft test cell construction drawings and the operations plan, and geotechnical and geologic site characterization reports can be added to the accomplishment list for the C-44 reservoir. These reservoirs will also help improve the health of our estuaries.

In Hendry and Palm Beach counties, accomplishments for the **Everglades**

**Agricultural Area Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) Expansion** are, well, expanding. Permits have been received or applied for. Basis of design reports for STA compartments and technical review briefings of those reports are a wrap, as well as preliminary, intermediate and final engineering documents. Site preparation construction contracts were issued for Compartment B, STA-2, Cell 4 and land use changes were initiated for Compartment C, STA-5, Floway 3. This project will further reduce phosphorus levels and help achieve state water quality standards for the Everglades.

The five-component **Water Preserve Areas** project is sizzling along. Located in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, the project will improve water quality and flow in the Everglades. Required permits are in process. Initial planning orders for the C-9 and C-11 Impoundments are complete, and geotechnical and survey work have begun. Survey and geotechnical work for the 3A and 3B seepage component are under way, plus a land use change for the Site 1 Impoundment has been initiated.

Progress for Miami-Dade County’s **Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands** project to restore natural water flows to Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park, and the **C-111 Spreader Canal** project to restore wetland and estuarine ecosystems, include completion of initial design work orders, seepage analyses and project criteria evaluations.

“Contractors are now on board for all *Acceler8* projects and designs are moving ahead to make way for scheduled construction starts,” said Tommy Strowd, assistant deputy executive director of the Everglades restoration initiative. “We’ve made tremendous progress over the past year,” he said.

Find out more about *Acceler8* by visiting [www.evergladesnow.org](http://www.evergladesnow.org)

*Great blue heron*



## Can you dig it?

*Acceler8 business outreach program offers job training opportunities*

### HELP WANTED:

**Heavy equipment operators and specialty subcontractors to build reservoirs, embankments, pump stations and concrete water-control structures.**

As part of an expanded business outreach initiative, the South Florida Water Management District has implemented a new job training program to assist unemployed workers and small and local businesses to directly benefit from the \$1.5 billion *Acceler8* Everglades restoration program.

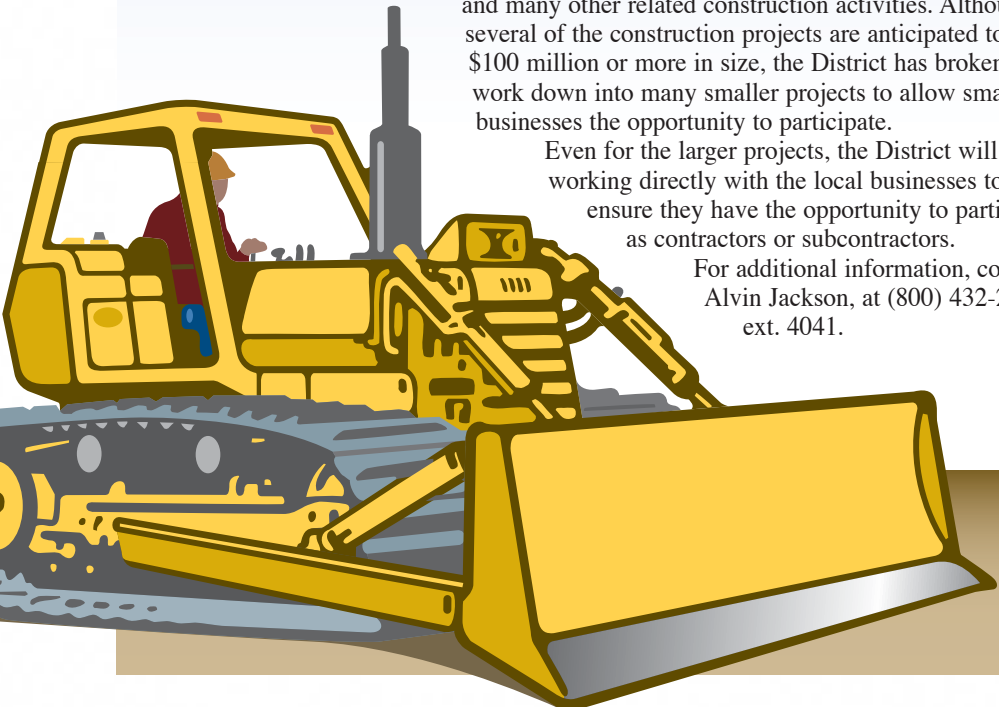
The District is reaching out to local communities in an unprecedented fashion. The agency has already implemented a job training program in the communities of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, and will do so soon in LaBelle. Interested residents who have enrolled in the program will be trained on how to operate the heavy equipment needed to construct the projects. “As the housing boom in South Florida has created a shortage of heavy equipment operators, the jobs training program will provide the contractors bidding on *Acceler8* projects a new pool of operators to hire,” said Carol Ann Wehle, District executive director.

By partnering with other agencies such as Workforce Alliance, the Palm Beach County School Board and Palm Beach Community College, the District can offer this training at low cost to the students.

The District is also reaching out to small business owners. The agency will need firms to remove trees and other existing vegetation from thousands of acres of agricultural land so that *Acceler8* reservoirs and other facilities can be built. Firms will also be needed to do demolition work, ditch digging, fence building, concrete pouring and many other related construction activities. Although several of the construction projects are anticipated to be \$100 million or more in size, the District has broken the work down into many smaller projects to allow small businesses the opportunity to participate.

Even for the larger projects, the District will be working directly with the local businesses to ensure they have the opportunity to participate as contractors or subcontractors.

For additional information, contact Alvin Jackson, at (800) 432-2045, ext. 4041.



## Find Freddy!

*Where in the District is Freddy?*



### CLUES:

- Freddy is visiting a place that offers ready access to two of South Florida’s major water bodies.
- Operated by Okeechobee County, family fun here includes camping, fishing, picnicking, boating, water sports, bicycling, bird watching, hiking and delicious dining on local delicacies.
- The location is considered part of the national park system and well-marked hiking trails can take you in different directions.
- Visitors come from all over the world to visit and experience these natural treasures.

*Give up? The answer is on the back page.*